



[4910-13-P]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2018-0336; Product Identifier 2017-SW-130-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: We propose to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) for Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH (Airbus Helicopters) Model EC135P1, EC135P2, EC135P2+, EC135P3, EC135T1, EC135T2, EC135T2+, and EC135T3 helicopters. This proposed AD would require replacing the retaining ring and inspecting the hoist cable hook assembly (hook). This proposed AD is prompted by a report that a hook detached from the hoist cable. The actions of this proposed AD are intended to prevent an unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: We must receive comments on this proposed AD by [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may send comments by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Docket: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for sending your comments electronically.
- Fax: 202-493-2251.

- Mail: Send comments to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590-0001.

- Hand Delivery: Deliver to the “Mail” address between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2018-0336; or in person at Docket Operations between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this proposed AD, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD, the economic evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The street address for Docket Operations (telephone 800-647-5527) is in the ADDRESSES section. Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

For service information identified in this proposed rule, contact Airbus Helicopters, 2701 N. Forum Drive, Grand Prairie, TX 75052; telephone (972) 641-0000 or (800) 232-0323; fax (972) 641-3775; or at http://www.helicopters.airbus.com/website/en/ref/Technical-Support_73.html. You may review the referenced service information at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy, Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: David Hatfield, Aviation Safety Engineer, Safety Management Section, Rotorcraft Standards Branch, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone (817) 222-5110; email david.hatfield@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

We invite you to participate in this rulemaking by submitting written comments, data, or views. We also invite comments relating to the economic, environmental, energy, or federalism impacts that might result from adopting the proposals in this document. The most helpful comments reference a specific portion of the proposal, explain the reason for any recommended change, and include supporting data. To ensure the docket does not contain duplicate comments, commenters should send only one copy of written comments, or if comments are filed electronically, commenters should submit only one time.

We will file in the docket all comments that we receive, as well as a report summarizing each substantive public contact with FAA personnel concerning this proposed rulemaking. Before acting on this proposal, we will consider all comments we receive on or before the closing date for comments. We will consider comments filed after the comment period has closed if it is possible to do so without incurring expense or delay. We may change this proposal in light of the comments we receive.

Discussion

EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD No. 2017-0199, dated October 11, 2017, to correct an unsafe condition for Airbus Helicopters Model EC135P1, EC135P2, EC135P2+, EC135P3, EC135T1, EC135T2, EC135T2+, EC135T3, EC635P2+, EC635P3, EC635T1, EC635T2+, and EC635T3 helicopters. EASA advises of a report of a hook separating from the hoist cable. According to EASA, an investigation determined that failure of the

internal retaining ring combined with a permanent compression set of the elastomeric energy absorber caused the separation. EASA states that this condition, if not corrected, could lead to the detachment of an external load or person from the hoist, possibly resulting in personal injury or injury to persons on the ground.

The EASA AD consequently requires repetitive inspections of the hook assembly and replacement of the retaining ring. Depending on the findings of the inspection, the EASA AD also requires replacement of the elastomeric energy absorber. According to the manufacturer of the hook, the retaining ring can corrode in a salt-laden environment. Therefore, replacement of the retaining ring is required with each inspection. EASA considers its AD an interim measure and states that further AD action may follow.

FAA's Determination

These helicopters have been approved by the aviation authority of Germany and are approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to our bilateral agreement with Germany, EASA, its technical representative, has notified us of the unsafe condition described in its AD. We are proposing this AD because we evaluated all known relevant information and determined that an unsafe condition is likely to exist or develop on other products of the same type design.

Related Service Information Under 1 CFR part 51

We reviewed Goodrich Service Bulletin No. 44301-10-17, Revision 4, dated July 26, 2017. The Goodrich Service Bulletin is attached as an appendix to Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin No. ASB EC135-85A-069, Revision 0, dated August 2, 2017. This service information specifies an initial and repetitive inspections of the hook assembly and replacement of the retaining ring. If the inspections of elastomeric energy absorber

detect a permanent compression set, this service information also specifies replacing the elastomeric energy absorber.

This service information is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the ADDRESSES section.

Proposed AD Requirements

This proposed AD would require, within 90 hours time-in-service (TIS) and thereafter at intervals not to exceed 180 hours TIS, replacing the retaining ring and inspecting the elastomeric energy absorber for a permanent compression set, and if necessary, replacing the elastomeric energy absorber before the next hoist operation.

Differences between this Proposed AD and the EASA AD

The EASA AD requires corrective actions in terms of months in service. This proposed AD would require compliance within 90 hours TIS and thereafter at intervals not to exceed 180 hours TIS. The EASA AD applies to Airbus Helicopters Model EC635P2+, EC635P3, EC635T1, EC635T2+, and EC635T3 helicopters. This proposed AD would not because these model helicopters have no FAA type certificate.

Interim Action

We consider this proposed AD to be an interim action. The design approval holder is currently developing a modification that will address the unsafe condition identified in this proposed AD. Once this modification is developed, approved, and available, we might consider additional rulemaking.

Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this proposed AD would affect 278 helicopters of U.S. Registry and that labor costs average \$85 per work-hour. Based on these estimates, we expect the following costs:

- Inspecting the hoist cable hook assembly and replacing the retaining ring would require 0.5 work-hour and parts would be minimal for a cost of \$43 per helicopter and \$11,954 for the U.S. fleet per inspection cycle.
- Replacing an elastomeric energy absorber would require 0.5 work-hour and parts would cost \$2,152 for a cost of \$2,195 per helicopter.

Authority for This Rulemaking

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. "Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs," describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

We are issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in "Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements." Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

Regulatory Findings

We determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed, I certify this proposed regulation:

1. Is not a “significant regulatory action” under Executive Order 12866;
2. Is not a “significant rule” under the DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979);
3. Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska to the extent that it justifies making a regulatory distinction; and
4. Will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

We prepared an economic evaluation of the estimated costs to comply with this proposed AD and placed it in the AD docket.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by adding the following new airworthiness directive (AD):

Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH Helicopters: Docket No. FAA-2018-0336;
Product Identifier 2017-SW-130-AD.

(a) Applicability

This AD applies to Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH Model EC135P1, EC135P2, EC135P2+, EC135P3, EC135T1, EC135T2, EC135T2+, and EC135T3 helicopters, certificated in any category, with an external mounted hoist (hoist) part number (P/N) and hook assembly (hook) P/N shown in Table 1 to paragraph (a) of this AD:

Hoist P/Ns	Hook P/Ns
44301-10-2	44301-420
44301-10-5	44301-420
44301-10-6	44301-420
44301-10-10	44301-423
44301-10-11	44301-423
44301-10-12	44301-423
44301-10-13	44301-423

Table 1 to Paragraph (a)

(b) Unsafe Condition

This AD defines the unsafe condition as detachment of a hook from a hoist cable resulting in in-flight failure of the hoist, which could result in injury to persons being lifted.

(c) Comments Due Date

We must receive comments by [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE Federal Register].

(d) Compliance

You are responsible for performing each action required by this AD within the specified compliance time unless it has already been accomplished prior to that time.

(e) Required Actions

Within 90 hours time-in-service (TIS) and thereafter at intervals not to exceed 180 hours TIS:

(1) Inspect the hook and determine whether the elastometric energy absorber has taken a permanent compression set by following the Accomplishment Instructions, paragraphs 2.A and 2.B, of Goodrich Service Bulletin No. 44301-10-17, Revision 4, dated July 26, 2017 (SB 44301-10-17). If the elastometric energy absorber has taken a permanent compression set, replace the elastometric energy absorber before the next hoist operation.

(2) Replace the retaining ring by following the Accomplishment Instructions, paragraphs 2.D through 2.K, of SB 44301-10-17.

(f) Special Flight Permits

Special flight permits may be permitted provided the hoist is not used.

(g) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)

(1) The Manager, Safety Management Section, Rotorcraft Standards Branch, FAA, may approve AMOCs for this AD. Send your proposal to: David Hatfield, Aviation Safety Engineer, Safety Management Section, Rotorcraft Standards Branch, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone (817) 222-5110; email 9-ASW-FTW-AMOC-Requests@faa.gov.

(2) For operations conducted under a 14 CFR part 119 operating certificate or under 14 CFR part 91, subpart K, we suggest that you notify your principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office or certificate holding district office before operating any aircraft complying with this AD through an AMOC.

(h) Additional Information

The subject of this AD is addressed in European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD No. 2017-0199, dated October 11, 2017. You may view the EASA AD on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> in the AD Docket.

(i) Subject

Joint Aircraft Service Component (JASC) Code: 2500, Cabin Equipment/Furnishings.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on August 23, 2018.

Scott A. Horn,

Deputy Director for Regulatory Operations,
Compliance & Airworthiness Division,
Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 2018-19430 Filed: 9/6/2018 8:45 am; Publication Date: 9/7/2018]